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As scientists and healthcare professionals, we continuously try to better the lives of ourselves and the people around us through science and medicine. I have been privileged to work in an Institute and with individuals whose motto is exactly that: Better science for better health. In 2017, during the March for Science, my then 6-year-old son carried a sign that read, "Remember polio? I don’t!"

At the SHE Center, we strive to have an exchange of ideas and knowledge with our colleagues in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region for the betterment of humankind. We live in a global village, and with the advancements in travel and communication, it is certain that diseases don’t see borders. Therefore, it is critical for us to connect with our healthcare counterparts in the MENA region. Throughout our work in 2022, I have been most impressed and honored by the connections and trust we have established among our colleagues, in particular, our women faculty members and students in MENA. They are all eager to continue conversations and collaboration.

Our journey for better dialogue and knowledge exchange started in January, when Princess Ghida Talal of Jordan, the chair of King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC), agreed to be a guest in our SHE Teatime program for the celebration of International Women's Day 2022 in March. Princess Ghida, now a friend and colleague, has been personally touched by cancer in her family, and I was extremely humbled and fascinated during our conversation as she pointed out so many areas in which we could collaborate. This Teatime became our first in-person interview since the SHE Center was established in 2018, and the first time we travelled to the region since the COVID-19 pandemic. We put together a delegation of our colleagues that included Samantha O’Reilly, Jack Carew, and our United Nations Colleague Ms. Kreena Govendar, whose work at the UN specializes in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The SHE Center’s longtime colleague, Mr Ben Collins, from the International HIV Partnership, was also able to join us. We were able to tour KHCC and meet with the leadership. I had the honor of giving ground rounds to medical students and faculty and answering their questions. In addition, we conducted a short manuscript-writing workshop and a professional development workshop. We were also able to meet my friend and colleague, United States Ambassador Henry Wooster, at his residence in Amman and speak about advancing science, promoting health dialogue, and establishing scientific exchange programs with Jordan.

From Jordan we traveled to the UAE for similar conversations and collaborative meetings with our colleagues at University of Sharjah. There, we also held workshops with 20–30 people in person and around 50 people via Zoom. This trip was also quite productive as we met many talented students and junior faculty with whom we are still in contact.
In May 2022, I had the privilege of traveling to Morocco twice; first to Université Mohammed VI des Sciences De La Santé (UM6SS) in Casablanca, and second to be a keynote speaker at the conference at Mohammed VI Polytechnique University. Morocco is home to al-Quaraouiyine, the oldest university in the world in Fes, as well as one of the youngest medical schools in Casablanca. The visit to UM6SS was a pleasure as we met wonderful faculty and students eager to make connections. Our next stage plans are to prepare medical school curricula for the students and involve interested colleagues from DFCI and HMS in conducting the lectures. In addition, we are preparing another trip to Morocco to conduct our professional training workshops.

Our SHE team is growing both at DFCI and in the MENA region. I can’t say this enough: it is my honor to be mentoring these young individuals and learning from them, both here and abroad. When I see how young people and young women in the region are starting revolutions and demanding positive change, it highlights the incredible bravery of this generation firsthand. A few of our team members have initiated graduate programs but are still in connection with SHE. Samantha O’Reilly, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in global health and environment from Washington University in St. Louis and is now SHE’s Program Coordinator, attended and helped facilitate all our SHE Center workshops in 2022, and has now applied to graduate programs in public health. Jack Carew, who joined SHE in 2019, is also applying to PhD programs across the country. Noor Al-Rubaye started Ph.D. Health Services Research program at the University of Colorado at Denver. Seeing our mentees leading and forging a path for themselves is heartwarming.

I am so excited for 2023. Given our new collaborations and connection we initiated in 2022, we will continue our professional development workshops with added curricula and continue our travels to Jordan and Morocco. In both countries, we will initiate two new programs: our leadership workshops aimed at junior faculty and women, and our SHE Care program which will facilitate small-group discussions around women’s health, specifically reproductive health. We have initiated conversations without colleagues in Oman as well as in Al Ain UAE and will have our assessment trips for both countries in the first quarter of 2023. These introductions will lay the foundation for our next 5-year effort, during which we will continue our workshops and develop mentoring programs to train the next generation of young professionals to build more human resources, with the ultimate objective of expanding healthcare in resource-limited settings around the world.

2022 was the year of planting seeds during our trips; both for the SHE Center and for me, as a scientist, mentor, and speaker at several conferences in the region. Given sustainable funding, those seeds can take root and grow a strong tree that will weather the storms of an unpredictable world.
Zainab Salbi says, "Like life, peace begins with women. We are the first to forge lines of alliance and collaboration across conflict divides." I would add to that: education also begins with women! This year is ending with women across the globe, and especially in the MENA region, risking and sacrificing a great deal for freedom, education, and a better life for themselves and for their families. Once again, I am honored, resolute, and unwavering in leading the SHE Center to accomplish much in advancing health and education in the region by providing capacity, connections, and exchange of knowledge with our collaborative institutions.

Stay tuned and curious.
With best wishes for a productive 2023,

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Throughout 2022, the SHE Center has continued hosting “Teatimes with SHE” featuring several guests who have offered insight into the intersections of health with a variety of topics such as law, international politics, and entertainment. The Teatime discussions have been attended by individuals of various demographics, both within and outside the DFCI and HMS communities. Our conversations consist of a unique format conducive to increased audience participation through live Q+A and real-time feedback. With this, the aim is to offer an open dialogue and connection between our guest’s insight, the SHE Center’s mission and goals, and our attendees’ perspectives. Among our most successful Teatimes in 2022 have been four conversations with HRH Princess Ghida Talal, Professor Noam Chomsky, and Dr. Rahul Jandial.

**Princess Ghida Talal**

The SHE Teatime with Princess Ghida Talal was conducted in celebration of International Women’s Day 2022. This was the first in-person Teatime which took place in Amman, Jordan at the King Hussein Cancer Foundation headquarters. In honor of International Women’s Day, Princess Ghida and Dr. Madani shared their thoughts on a variety of topics ranging from mentorship, women’s leadership, and collaboration implementation between the MENA region and U.S. Princess Ghida was candid in her description of the challenges she faces as a leader in cancer awareness and advocacy in Jordan and across MENA. Cancer in MENA is impacted heavily by stigma brought on by cultural, social, and religious implications. Princess Ghida shared that, because of this, women in MENA often do not seek out preventative or screening measures against cancers – particularly breast cancer, which is the leading cancer among women in MENA. Princess Ghida emphasized the need to reduce stigma and broaden education about cancer screening and testing resources to combat the rise in incidence and cancer presence in the region. Dr. Madani spoke to the ways in which efforts at the SHE Center have led to increased partnership and idea exchange between students in MENA and the U.S. This partnership, it was argued, is key to promoting best practices in science and health in MENA, and expanding the capacity for public health education and training.
Both Princess Ghida and Dr. Madani shared their experience with mentorship, particularly the lessons learned from promoting women’s leadership in male-dominated spaces. Both women agreed that supporting and championing other women is integral in expanding opportunities for women in leadership positions. Mentorship is crucial in engaging women, particularly in the MENA region, and these relationships can be mutually beneficial as mentors can also learn a great deal from their mentees. Princess Ghida and Dr. Madani agreed that more can and should be done to encourage women to participate in health and leadership spaces, and that women’s leadership can pave the way for success in all sectors of society – education, equity, human rights, etc.

This Teatime drew over 100 viewers from 8 different countries, with an average age of 25-40, the majority of whom were women. The SHE Center is incredibly excited by the success of this Teatime and looks forward to a second part in continuation of this conversation with Princess Ghida in 2023.

Professor Noam Chomsky

Teatime with SHE hosted Professor Noam Chomsky to discuss the women-led uprising in Iran that surged in September of 2022. Professor Chomsky has been a long-time supporter of the SHE Center and recognized the need for increased attention, both in the U.S. and internationally, for the new wave of revolution taking place in Iran. In September of 2022, Mahsa Amini’s murder in Iran sparked the uprising of women throughout the country who demanding regime change in the name of oppressive gender norms and human rights violations. In the months since, thousands of Iranians have been violently targeted, among them women and students, for demanding a change to the status quo. Professor Chomsky and Dr. Madani covered a variety of topics in discussing the movement, including its unprecedented nature, lack of comparable media attention, and momentum among youth and women populations. Professor Chomsky spoke to the uniqueness of the movement in that there is no single leader of the revolution, which can serve as both a strength and a weakness to its longevity. Dr. Madani expressed that her own upbringing and experience under different rulers has positioned the current generation of women and young people to demand a more progressive and equitable approach to education, opportunity, and gender equity.

Both Professor Chomsky and Dr. Madani expressed their hope that this movement brings additional attention from world leaders and organizations who had yet to speak on its importance on a global level. It was disheartening to see pioneers of women’s rights and equality remain silent on the matter, and this Teatime emphasized the need for global awareness, support, and engagement with the movement in order to guarantee its success.
This Teatime drew over 50 participants from 6 different countries, the majority of whom were women and young people. This aligns with Professor Chomsky’s popularity in the MENA region, particularly Iran, and the SHE Center would look forward to Professor Chomsky’s continued insight into fights for human rights abroad.

**Dr. Rahul Jandial**

Teatime with SHE and Dr. Rahul Jandial was organized to complement the rise in international work conducted by the SHE Center throughout 2022. Dr. Jandial is a neurosurgeon based out of California, with international health work undertaken and monitored in South America and Europe.

Throughout 2022, the SHE Center has continued to accomplish elements of its international goals for collaboration and idea exchange in MENA. As a result, key questions and insights have arisen with regard to the implementation strategies and ethics of international collaboration. Dr. Jandial was a critical resource for offering added perspective to these issues in speaking to his experience working with hospitals, healthcare professionals, and community leaders in other parts of the world.

Dr. Jandial shared his process of collaboration selection and curriculum building, emphasizing how the elements of successful collaboration begin before arriving in-region. Projects must be mutually built and mutually beneficial to ensure both actors receive support and that this support is sustainable. Capacity building requires consistent reflection and revision to ensure needs are consistently being met in a productive and effective manner. Dr. Jandial shared about the inclusion of surveys, project modification methods, and frequent communication with community leaders in order to keep projects updated and relevant to the current situations in-region.

Finally, Dr. Jandial shared with Dr. Madani is take on the commonly-broached public health dilemma – how to weigh the ethics of intervention with the benefits of implementation. Dr. Jandial passionate expressed his belief that there is a great deal to learn from partners abroad and opportunities for collaboration can counteract previous precedents of brain drain, suppression of ideas, and corrupted resource distribution. Like Dr. Madani, Dr. Jandial expressed a call-to-action for our healthcare and public health workers to push for increased international collaboration so that global response to pandemics, advances in screening and testing for communicable diseases, and promotion of equity and equality in science and education can be achieved.

This Teatime drew over 50 participants from 6 different countries, with averages ages of under 20 and 21-35. The SHE Center looks forward to expanding on this call-to-action among healthcare workers in 2023.
Teatime with SHE will continue into 2023 as we ensure conversations surrounding women and minority engagement through science, health, and education can remain at the forefront of our efforts. Exciting collaborations for key dates such as World Cancer Day and International Women's Day will hopefully further expand our network of participants and offer increased opportunities to promote the mission, efforts, and future goals of the SHE Center across various communities, countries, and demographics.
Throughout 2022, the SHE Center has conducted several workshop series across the MENA region, in collaboration with hospitals, academic institutions, and centers of excellence for cancer care and research. At the beginning of 2022, the SHE Center’s goal was to conduct 2 workshops in MENA, closing out 2022 the Center has conducted 4 total. This surpassing of our initial goal speaks to the motivation within the MENA region to collaborate on best practices in science, health, and education, and the strength of international partnerships in the exchange of ideas and pursuit of positive health outcomes.

King Hussein Cancer Center – Amman, Jordan (March 2022)

In January 2022, the SHE Center began talks with King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC) and King Hussein Cancer Foundation (KHCF) to collaborate on a series of workshops to be hosted in-region by Dr. Madani and the SHE Center. The needs identified by KHCC and KHCF administration were designated under the categories of mentorship, manuscript writing, and best practices in research. In the spirit of bilateral exchange, the SHE Center was motivated to bring attention to International Women's Day by hosting a SHE Teatime with HRH Princess Ghida Talal. Thus, the first series of workshops with KHCC was set for March 2022 where the goals for collaboration were:

- Develop a mutually beneficial curriculum for mentorship, manuscript writing, and best practices in research
- Engage students and healthcare professionals, alike, in workshop participation - with a concentration on women
- Understand operational strengths and areas for growth within KHCC
- Assess potential for long-standing partnership between KHCC and the SHE Center, with next steps clearly identified

Prior to arrival in-region, the SHE Center developed a series of curriculum in “Manuscript Writing”, “Grant Writing”, and “Mentorship in Networking” to be conducted over a week-long visit to KHCC. KHCC leadership advertised the workshop among their center's population, scheduled meetings for the SHE Center with high-level administration, and allotted time for Dr. Madani to give a “grand rounds” talk on her research and development of SHE.

In Jordan, the SHE Center conducted the workshop series over the course of 3 days, with over 40 participants across several demographics: students, young professionals, established leadership, etc. While the majority participants were still women, there were equal levels of vocal contribution and participation in workshops by men and women.
The SHE Center received overwhelmingly positive feedback from workshop participants in the relevance of content, engagement with material in practice, and potential for future expansion.

In meetings with administration, KHCC leadership identified additional areas of growth their center hoped to expand on into the SHE partnership, including clinical trial research, manuscript editing and revision, and women’s leadership training. Thus, the SHE Center aimed to put together a Memorandum of Understanding with KHCC to solidify this partnership. Next steps were identified as expanding on manuscript editing and revision and developing a leadership curriculum for future trips.

University of Sharjah – Sharjah, UAE (March 2022)

In January 2022, the SHE Center also engaged in talks with representatives from the University of Sharjah to conduct a similar workshop series as outlined above at KHCC. The University of Sharjah identified a need for increased motivation within research and writing practices among their graduate student population.

Similarly, the SHE Center conducted a multi-day workshop in manuscript writing, grant writing, and best practices in mentorship and networking. A notable difference among participants at the University of Sharjah was the degree to which students felt like the university itself offered adequate support for research ambitions and projects. The goals for collaboration were:

- Engage students in workshop participation – with a concentration on women
- Understand operational strengths and areas for growth within University of Sharjah
- Assess potential for long-standing partnership between University of Sharjah and the SHE Center, with next steps clearly identified

While the skills taught during the SHE workshops were helpful, students felt that the implementation of these skills was less available to them given barriers to research at their institution such as funding, availability of mentors, etc.

This workshop series hosted 30 participants, majority women, who ranged in academic and research backgrounds from clinical medicine, public health, and technology/computer science. Students were candid with Dr. Madani about their accessibility to research opportunities and were helpful in identifying next steps within the university for future collaboration. The SHE Center noted that participants were majority ex-pats, who did not have explicit ties to Sharjah or the UAE, and who planned to continue study or work outside of UAE in the future. This demographic is not ideal for SHE Center operations, as the goal is to promote capacity building and sustainability of best practices by training of the trainers – something that cannot be possible if the trainers themselves are leaving the country and/or region.
Next steps with the University of Sharjah were identified as maintaining communication between university and SHE Center leadership, with updates given later on in 2022.

Université Mohammed VI des Sciences Santés – Casablanca, Morocco (May 2022)

In April 2022, the SHE Center began conversations with Université Mohammed VI des Sciences Santés (UM6SS) in Casablanca, Morocco. As a newer university, administration at UM6SS was interested in expanding on the developments made in research practices during the first 6 years of operation by partnering with the SHE Center. UM6SS was interested in furthering research capacity in particular, identifying a need among students to better understand practice in manuscript writing and mentorship/networking skills.

The SHE Center travelled to Casablanca to host this workshop series over 3 days – with opportunities to speak and meet with students one-on-one, tour the resources and technology at the university, and meet with university leadership, including the President and supporting advisory team. Workshop participants were majority women, under the age of 30, who were pursuing medical and public health degrees at UM6SS. The demographic at UM6SS was, generally, young and identified Moroccan – with established roots and interest in remaining in-country. The goals for the workshop were:

- Engage students in workshop participation – with a concentration on women
- Understand operational strengths and areas for growth within UM6SS
- Establish strong relationship with UM6SS leadership
- Assess potential for partnership and future collaboration between UM6SS and the SHE Center, with the next steps clearly identified

The workshop series at UM6SS was an overwhelming success, with university leadership also sitting in and participating in the multi-day instruction. This, in particular, was identified by the SHE Center as a unique strength at UM6SS, where students could see their leadership personally invested in the success of their students and their students’ careers. The existing camaraderie and collaboration between students were also unique to UM6SS – in a way that was not as visible at previous institutions – where students seemed motivated to work together, serve as peer mentors, etc. instead of promoting a sense of competition or isolation in research projects and career development.

Next steps with UM6SS were identified as designing a Memorandum of Understanding between UM6SS and the SHE Center for future collaboration, potentially in manuscript revision/editing, leadership, and research partnerships.
King Hussein Cancer Center – Amman, Jordan (September 2022)

The SHE Center conducted a second workshop series at King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC) in September 2022. This second workshop series marked the culmination of almost 4 months of planning in preparation for the “Guidance and Strategies in Manuscript Writing and Revision” curriculum conducted with 23 participants over 3 days. This series also marked the first of this curriculum in-region, with the inclusion of a SHE-hired editor in reviewing KHCC student manuscripts. The goals were:

- Collect 20-25 draft manuscripts from students at KHCC as selected by KHCC leadership for review and revision by Dr. Madani and SHE-hired editor
- Blind-assess the collected manuscripts and arrive in Jordan with written feedback and edits
- Conduct a 3-day workshop with revision goals including: peer review, group review, personal review, and professional review
- Identify next steps in collaboration efforts with KHCC

The manuscript revisions were conducted over Summer 2022, with edits finalized upon arrival to Amman in September of 2022. Workshop participants were majority women, between the ages of 25-35, and all in professional stages of their research and clinical careers.

The content of the manuscripts was both clinical and quantitative in nature, with structures varying in detail and organization. The SHE Center curriculum encouraged an NIH format of organization for the manuscripts, and reserved edits made until workshop participants made self-revisions and peer-exchanged papers to maximize manuscript strengthen. At the conclusion of the workshop, students had 3 sets of edits – peer edits, person edits, and SHE Center edits. The feedback from students was extremely positive as they recognized the workshop content as relevant, comprehensive, and strategic in accordance with their research and publishing goals for the future.

The SHE Center also conducted a one-day workshop at Saudi Hospital in Amman, Jordan on mentorship and networking for young medical students with positive feedback.

The SHE Center identified next steps with KHCC as the official signing of an MOU joining KHCC, KHCF, and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute leadership in the beginning of 2023, and a continuation of workshop series in leadership and research development moving forward.

The SHE Center successfully conducted 4 workshop series in 2022, establishing strong relationships with multiple institutions across MENA with clear next steps for partnership and collaboration. See below for photos of this exciting work.
KHCC  
AMMAN, JORDAN

UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH  
SHARJAH, UAE

UM6SS  
CASABLANCA, MOROCCO

DR. NAVID MADANI, AMBASSADOR HENRY WOOSTER, SAMANTHA O’REILLY

DR MADANI'S GROUND ROUND AT UM6SS IN CASABLANCA MOROCCO
DR. SUHA GHOUL, SHE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT SPEAKING AT THE CONFERENCE

DR. MADANI AND DR. ASEM MANSOUR AT KHCC CONFERENCE

DR. MADANI AND COLLEAGUES AT KHCC CONFERENCE

DR. MADANI AND TWO MEDICAL GRADUATES DRS. RU’A RIMAWI AND HALA ABDO FROM PALESTINE
Grand Rounds

Upon invitation to workshops in King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC), University of Sharjah, and Université Mohammed VI des Sciences Santé (UM6SS), Dr. Madani was asked to give a series of “grand rounds” talks to students, faculty, and institutional leadership. Dr Madani’s talks, centered around “The FACE of Diseases”, discussed her HIV research, lessons learned in science from COVID-19, and her personal public health call-to-action to establish the SHE Center.

The grand rounds talks at KHCC in March 2022 and September 2022 were open to the entire KHCC faculty, and both attended by over 60 people. In September 2022, Dr. Madani presented a version of her talk, titled, "The FACE of Diseases: influence of media on cancer education and prevention", discussing the need for physicians and health care workers to be more involved in public health communication and education to the lay public.

The grand rounds talk at University of Sharjah was livestreamed to the university's student population to accommodate for virtual attendance. At UM6SS, student, faculty, and university leadership attended, with an audience of over 75. At each institution, Dr. Madani’s talk preceded the workshop series which allowed students to familiarize themselves with Dr. Madani’s prior work to approach the workshop with specific questions, personal anecdotes, and/or requests for programming which furthered the efficacy of the workshop curriculum.

World Cancer Congress 2022 – Geneva, Switzerland (October 2022)

In September 2022, the SHE Center was made aware of the World Cancer Congress returning to in-person programming in October of 2022. SHE Center Program Coordinator, Sammi O’Reilly, traveled to Geneva, Switzerland as a delegate to the Congress. The Congress featured several themes in screening and testing, treatment and care, and regional-specific progress and limitations. As the SHE Center focuses operations in the MENA region, the Congress was approached by the SHE team with MENA updates and showcased research in focus.

Among the talks attended were "Power, Influence and Equity: Achieving positive reform for cancer prevention", “UICC / WHO Policy dialogue: sustainable financing for cancer control”, "Implementing large-scale palliative care training in low- and middle-income countries: experiences and challenges", and “Cancer care in times of uncertainty, conflict and war”.

CONFERENCES, TALKS AND SYMPOSIAS
The Congress also hosted region-specific meetings, and SHE attended the “Eastern Mediterranean Regional Meeting” as identified by UN designating MENA with this region. At the meeting, several representatives from Jordan, Oman, Egypt, and UAE were in attendance and contributed individual updates to advances in care and research within their respective countries. HRH Princess Dina of Jordan presided over the meeting and called for increased inter-regional collaboration between MENA organizations and entities. Princess Dina emphasized that important and groundbreaking work is being conducted in the region, and more collaboration and communication is needed to further everyone’s independent goals and successes.

Dana-Farber Colleagues were also in attendance at the World Cancer Congress 2022 to lead talks and showcase abstracts about the research being done in our own institution.

**Global Oncology Symposium – Boston, MA (November 2022)**

In August of 2022, several centers and individuals leading global oncology work at Dana-Farber (including the SHE Center) joined together to establish the Center for Global Health at DFCI, officially announced by Dr. Laurie Glimcher at the Global Oncology Symposium in November 2022. The Global Oncology Symposium was designed to feature the existing global health work being conducted at DFCI, along with the ambitions of colleagues both at DFCI and outside, in advancing global health-related missions and goals.

As the Center for Global Health was being established at DFCI in affiliation with Harvard Medical School, Symposium organizers honored Dr. Paul Farmer on multiple occasions through the Symposium, to emphasize his long-standing contribution to global health work. Paul Farmer set the precedent for physicians and healthcare workers to look beyond their own home fronts to communities and individuals around the world with fewer resources to safeguarding and promoting their own health and health education.

DFCI organizers included Dr. Navid Madani, Dr. Tim Rebbeck, Dr. Leslie Lehmann, Lori Buswell, and Dr. Dayo Fadelu. Non-DFCI speakers included Dr. Patrick Loehrer of Indiana University’s Global Oncology Program, Dr. Joarly Lormil of Partners in Health in Haiti, and Dr. Mariam ElSherif of the Children’s Cancer Hospital of Egypt. The link copied provides a published summary of the successful Global Oncology Symposium: https://dfcionline.org/news/2022/global-oncology-symposium-spotlights-partnerships/
King Hussein Cancer Research Conference – Amman, Jordan (November 2022)

In November 2022, Dr. Madani was asked to serve on a scientific review committee for a selection of abstracts from students and faculty at King Hussein Cancer Center in Amman, Jordan. Dr. Madani review the almost 300 abstracts prior to her arrival at the conference and participated in awarding the top abstracts with honorable recognition by KHCC and the conference’s attendees.

While there, Dr. Madani also moderated a panel discussing cancer research and awareness in MENA and Jordan, specifically. The panel was attended by KHCC students, faculty, and leadership and also welcomed the many international attendees that presented at the conference. Dr. Madani had the opportunity to meet with SHE supporters, HRH Princess Ghida and HRH Princess Dina of Jordan, to briefly discuss the upcoming goals shared by SHE and KHCC/KHCF for 2023.

5th Combined Gulf Cancer Conference – Sharjah, UAE (November 2022)

In November 2022, Dr. Madani was invited to speak at the 5th Combined Gulf Cancer Conference in Sharjah, UAE. The conference was organized across 3 days, with general themes for each day that ranged from screening and testing barriers, palliative care and survivorship, and regional collaboration methods for paths forward.

Dr. Madani’s talk was titled, “The FACE of Diseases: influence of media on cancer education and prevention” and was well-received, particularly in its call-to-action for physicians to have a larger role in communicating public health education to the lay public. Dr. Madani highlighted lessons learned from COVID-19, wherein scientific information became politicized and resulted in increased misinformation and mistrust of healthcare providers. The talk emphasized the important role that the media plays in communicating matters of health and science and called for a stronger direct role of science and health professionals in the media to account for this widespread reach to the public – particularly young people.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity to hear from individuals around the world, and mostly from the combined gulf countries, about their research and goals for cancer care in 2023. The SHE Center is excited about connections made with the Oman Cancer Society, Qatar Cancer Society, and individuals in Bahrain to further the SHE Center’s efforts in MENA in 2023.
Samantha O’Reilly – Program Coordinator

“In 2022, I have continued my work with the SHE Center as Program Coordinator, developing curriculum and workshop programming for collaborations in Jordan, Morocco, and UAE. I had the opportunity to compliment this work with an internship at ReShape/International HIV Partnerships in London, England. I attended the World Cancer Congress 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland and the 5th Combined Gulf Cancer Conference in Sharjah, UAE to further my awareness and contribution to international cancer care and advocacy. In addition to international work, I aided in hosting the Global Oncology Symposium for the launch of the Center for Global Health at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. I am currently applying to programs to continue my higher education in Public Health in 2023.”

Jack Carew – SHE Collaborator

“In 2022, I continued to collaborate with the SHE Center through an internship with the King Hussein Cancer Center and Foundation in Amman, Jordan. While working with the Jordan Breast Cancer Program as the Monitoring and Evaluation Intern, I prepared and submitted a manuscript for publication analyzing the impacts of the 2020 breast cancer awareness campaign on utilization of breast cancer screening methods. After completion of this internship, which was funded by the Center for Arabic Study Abroad intensive Arabic fellowship, I designed and conducted an epidemiological study of differences in breast cancer mortality in urban and rural areas of Romania as a recipient of the Cancer Epidemiology Education in Special Populations fellowship. I completed this project at the same time as completing my Master in Public Health at the University of Vermont. I have now relocated to Boston, where I am conducting vector biology research in Dr. Flaminia Catteruccia’s laboratory at Harvard School of Public Health and designing "Global Cancer Epidemiology," a course that I will teach next summer a recently-appointed faculty member in the University of Vermont's Public Health Program.”
Zara Khan – SHE Collaborator

“This year I began my final year of medical school and continued to expand on my global health interests through the SHE Center. I’ve spent the past year finalizing my decision to pursue the specialty of obstetrics and gynecology while completing numerous clinical rotations including gynecologic oncology, maternal fetal medicine, anesthesia, and intensive care. I’m currently working on my SHE Center research project studying the social and cultural barriers related to cervical cancer screening in Muslim populations. Further, I’ve continued working in collaboration with Dr. Deena Kishawi and the American Medical Association to add “Middle East and North Africa (MENA)” as a separate demographic identifier in the 2030 United States Census. Finally, I was accepted to Tufts Global Health Program and designed an independent 1-month global health project at Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan where I will participate in a service-learning experience and obtain the skills needed to tackle global health challenges worldwide from a clinical perspective.”

Shams Mohajerani - SHE Collaborator

After interning last spring, Shams moved back to Cairo to work full-time as Sales & Acquisitions Executive at MAD Solutions, a leading Arab world distributor of Arabic-language cinema. His experiences over the past four months have been incredible as he dive into the world of film distribution, which has included fantastic experiences working at Cairo International Film Festival and Red Sea IFF in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Noor Al-Rubaye – SHE Collaborator

In 2022, I continued to collaborate with the SHE Center while simultaneously working as a consultant for the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs). My work at the WHO centered on a range of noncommunicable disease (NCD) issues, including, but not limited to, the incorporation of NCD risk factors into emergency settings and among migrant communities in the region. I was awarded a full scholarship and relocated to Denver in August to pursue a doctorate in Health Services Research at the University of Colorado Denver. During my doctoral studies, I started working as a research assistant for Systems for Action, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) signature research program that helps to build the evidence base for a Culture of Health by meticulously assessing novel ways of connecting the nation’s medical, social, and public health systems.
To expand on our curriculum efforts in 2023, the SHE Center will establish the initiative called SHE Cares. SHE Cares will be a locally-run, collaboration network of women across MENA (and with international partners) to learn, share, and promote best self-practices for women's health. The health issues covered will range from learning breast self-examination, attunement to menstrual and reproductive cycle phases, STI prevention and sexual health safety, and cancer screening and detection schedules. These issues are region-specific and the SHE Center will be advised by in-region collaborators to ensure the programming is relevant and effective to the needs of the communities. The programming will consist of frequent workshops, run in collaboration with local organizations and allies, to ensure accessible participation and attendance of sessions. Participants will mainly be women of the age range 14-30 years old, with an interest in building an education network for support and engagement in important matters of women's health.

SHE Cares is named as such to emphasize the core mission of this initiative: training of the trainers. The workshop participants will harness the education and resources received during the training to then themselves become educators among their own personal networks of women: their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, etc. who may not have been similarly engaged to prioritize and promote their own health needs. In translating and sharing this education with their respective community members, the “daughters” of this initiative will have the capacity to own the work and information themselves, thus ensuring the effects of this program will continue in the absence of international or foreign intervention. This network of women will remain protected and connected through the facilitation of the SHE Center, yet the power and accountability will remain in-region to promote capacity-building and a strong precedent for public and women’s health empowerment and engagement.

Additionally, the SHE Center aims to further develop and present our Leadership Curriculum in collaboration with MENA institutions in 2023. This leadership curriculum has been requested during our workshops in 2022 to expand on some key concepts included in our existing workshops, such as elevator pitches, networking, and mentorship for career advancement and support. We aim to have our leadership span across different degrees of prior training, professional status, and age range, and have both a general leadership training, and training for women’s leadership, specifically. The goal is to expand on best practices in health and science through leadership behaviors, skills, and mentalities to work towards a more equal and equitable playing field among men and women in MENA, and among MENA healthcare professionals on the global stage.
In November 2022, Dr. Madani was interviewed for a spotlight piece in Harper’s Bazaar Arabia for their February 2023 issue themed: Women at Work. Dr. Madani was interviewed by an editor for the magazine who was interested in relaying her story of scientific career development, international public health efforts, and personal lessons in survivorship and mentorship. Dr. Madani took the time in her interview to emphasize how the transition throughout her career to compliment her basic science training with public health advocacy has led her to better understand the challenges that exist within health and education inequities internationally. She shared that her personal connection to the MENA region has developed significantly as she can speak to students, specifically women, on a personal and one-on-one level, using the inspiring stories of the individuals she meets to encourage and motivate her work along the way. We hope the piece will further promote the SHE Center’s work throughout the MENA region, and potentially reach new key stakeholders and/or individuals who are interested in supporting the SHE Center’s work. We are very much looking forward to the article in February and are excited to share the piece with our SHE Center community.

International Women’s Day 2023

The SHE Center would like to partner with Harper’s Bazaar Arabia for International Women’s Day 2023 to expand on this discussion and further unite women across MENA. We plan to identify several women based in MENA and/or abroad who are of varying demographics – age, education level, background, etc. who all have a connection to science or health. The women would then participate in a joint interview, with questions designed by the Harper’s Bazaar team based on reader interest. The women would have short biographic features/summaries accompanying them, but the larger discussion with all women (4-6 total) would be the focus of the piece. The larger discussion will be a unique opportunity to pose the same questions to women of very different perspectives to maximize the reader’s awareness and motivation to understand the health issues in their region.

The group could include a medical student, a hospital administrator, a mid-career nurse, a public health student, a senior researcher, and potentially Princess Ghida again to join a variety of perspectives and experiences in matters of women’s health and women’s equity in participating in the health sector.

This piece should be health-specific to draw attention to the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing limitations and inequalities for women’s health in the region, such as increased stress on family care, vulnerability in pregnancy, and mistrust of science do to misinformation at the beginning of pandemic response. Having a health-focus for International Women’s Day, especially a focus on women in health, would be the ultimate call for empowerment and engagement of women readers as they will see themselves reflected in the vulnerabilities, the challenges, and, most importantly, the successes of the women featured who are calling for accountability and autonomy over their own health.
International Women's Day is a once-a-year opportunity to emphasize the strides already made in matters of women's engagement and leadership and highlight the ways in which we still must work together to achieve equity and rights security at a global level. The SHE Center and Harper's Bazaar Arabia present a great opportunity for collaboration to do exactly that.

Social Media Takeovers

In accordance with the recent call-to-action put forth by Dr. Madani for physicians and healthcare professionals to take greater accountability in relaying important health messaging to the lay public, the SHE Center will launch a series of "social media takeovers" in 2023. Identified SHE collaborators/colleagues will “takeover” the SHE Center Instagram to bring SHE audience through their working days/weeks – including their schedules, meetings, procedures, rotations, etc. – to showcase their clinical and research work day-to-day. The goals are to provide further transparency, awareness, and accessibility between physician/healthcare worker and lay public and to promote physician/healthcare work accountability in relaying best practices and reliable health information. This initiative will hopefully emphasize the SHE Center’s mission to increase health awareness, healthcare system education, and information accessibility, in the MENA and U.S. Stay tuned for these takeovers and make sure to follow the SHE Center’s social media closely to see some familiar faces!